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Message Text

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ACTION SS-15

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 OC-06 CCO-00
A-01 CPR-01 USSS-00 SY-05 ICAE-00 PA-01 SAB-02
/042 W
----------021818 042349Z /61
O R 042135Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6865
INFO PANCANAL
USSOUTHCOM

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 PANAMA 3089

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (CARTER, JIMMY)
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO PANAMA

REF: STATE 112308

1. HEREWITH SOME PRELIMINARY COMMENTS ON
PROPOSED SCHEDULE FOR PRESIDENT'S VISIT AS WELL AS REPLIES
AVAILABLE NOW TO QUESTIONS POSED IN REFTEL. WE
ARE CONSULTING CLOSELY WITH PANCANAL AND SOUTHCOM ON
ALL ASPECTS OF VISIT AS WE WILL BE DRAWING HEAVILY ON THEIR
RESOURCES AND FACILITIES TO SUPPORT VISIT.

2. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS:
THE PROPOSED SCHEDULE IS FEASIBLE BUT THERE ARE SOME IMPORTANT
CAVEATS. PANAMA IS A SMALL COUNTRY WITH LIMITED FACILITIES
AND A PRESIDENTIAL VISIT OF THE NAGNITUDE DESCRIBED WILL
SORELY STRAIN AVAILABLE RESOURCES. THE VISIT OF THE OTHER
CHIEFS OF STATE, THEIR RETINUES AND ACCOMPANYING PRESS WILL
ONLY AGGRAVATE OUR PROBLEMS. THE MAIN DIFFICQLTIES ARE LOGISTICAL
AND RELATE PARTICULARLY TO THE PROPOSAL TO VISIT CONTADORA,
A SMALL RESORT ISLAND SOME 37 MILES FROM PANAMA CITY, AND
SANTIAGO DE VERAGUAS, AN EQUALLY ISOLATED TOWN IN THE INTERIOR.
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AIRPORT FACILITIES ARE INADEQUATE BOTH AT CONTADORA AND SANTIAGO.
WE ARE PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT FLIGHT SAFETY ASPECTS OF
THE VISIT BECAUSE OF THE LARGE NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT INVOLVED,
POSSIBLE FLIGHTS OVER WATER AND AT NIGHT, CONSTRICTED
AIR SPACE, LACK OF ADEQUATE AIR CONTROL AND REFUELING
FACILITIES, AND THE CURRENT RAINY SEASON WITH ITS FREQUENT
AND SEVERE STORMS. WE STRONGLY URGE THAT PRESIDENT'S OWN

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HELICOPTER BE BROUGHT TO PANAMA AND USED FOR ALL HIS AERIAL MOVE-
MENTS.

3. SPECIFIC REPLIES TO REFTEL QUERIES:
A. A 4:00 P.M. ARRIVAL OF PRESIDENT APPEARS TOO LATE
IN DAY TO ALLOW FOR COMPLETION OF CEREMONIES AND SPEECHES
BEFORE DARK THEREBY NECESSITATING NIGHT FLIGHT TO CONTADORA.
EARLIER ARRIVAL ALSO DESIRABLE FOR BILATERAL TALKS WITH OTHER
PRESIDENTS. EMBASSY PROPOSES FOLLOWING TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

JUNE 16
1400 - ARRIVAL AT TOCUMEN AIRPORT
1420 - COMPLETION OF AIRPORT ARRIVAL CEREMONIES
1420 - 1500 MOTORCADE INTO PANAMA CITY.
1500 - ARRIVAL AT PALACIO JUSTO AROSEMENA (LEGISLATIVE
PALACE) FOR EXCHANGE OF INSTRUMENTS OF RATIFICATION;
BRIEF REMARKS.
1530 - ADDRESS CROWD ASSEMBLED IN SHALER TRIANGLE FROM STAND
ON ROOF OF LEGISLATIVE PALACE
1630 - DEPART BY HELICOPTERS FOR CONTADORA
1700 - ARRIVE CONTADORA
1700-1900 - GROUP AND/OR BILATERAL MEETINGS WITH OTHER LATIN
AMERICAN PRESIDENTS
1900-2100 - FREE TIME
2100 - DINNER, FOLLOWED BY FOLKLORE DANCING

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JUNE 17
0800 - DEPART CONTADORA FOR SANTIAGO BY HELICOPTER
0855 - ARRPVE SANTIAGO. TOUR CITY WITH GENERAL TORRIJOS
1030 - DEPART SANTIAGO FOR CANAL ZONE
1115 - ARRIVE CANAL ZONE (SEE PARA 5 FOR SUGGESTED CZ PROGRAMS)
1315 - DEPART CANAL ZONE FOR TOCUMEN AIRPORT BY HELICOPTER;
AIRPORT CEREMONIES
1400 - DEPARTURE FROM PANAMA

NOTE: SCHEDULE REQUIRES CONSIDERABLE REFINEMZNT IN ACCORDANCE WITH
TIMES NECESSARY FOR DIFFERENT ELEMENTS (I.E., PRESIDENT, OFFICIAL
PARTY, PRESS) TO ARRIVE AT DIFFERENT LOCATIONS USING VARIOUS
TYPES OF AIRCRAFT.

B. LEGISLATIVE PALACE WILL ACCOMMODATE MAXIMUM OF 750
PERSONS, INCLUDING USE OF EXTRA CHAIRS. HAVE NO INDICATION AS YET
OF NUMBERS PANAMANIANS WILL INVITE. FACILITIES FOR PRESS ARE
VIRTUALLY NON-EXISTENT.

C. LANDING AREAS NEAR THE LEGISLATIVE PALACE/SHALER
TRIANGLE ARE NOT CONSIDERED SAFE FOR A PRESIDENTIAL HELICOPTER.
LANDING SPACE IS SMALL IN A CONFINED AREA SURROUNDED BY

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OBSTACLES. ADDITIONALLY, FLYING DEBRIS FROM ROTOR BLADES WOULD CONSTITUTE A REAL HAZARD TO ANTICIPATED CROWDS. ALBROOK AIR FORCE STATION, APPROXIMATELY FIVE MINUTES AWAY BY CAR, IS CONSIDERED THE BEST AND MOST SUITABLE AREA TO PICK UP THE PRESIDENT AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE PARTY FOR FLIGHT TO CONTADORA.

D. HOTEL FACILITIES AT CONTADORA ARE NOE ADEQUATE FOR A PARTY OF 200-250. THE TOTAL NUMBER OF HOTEL ROOMS ON THE ISLAND IS 175, OF WHICH 60 ARE OLDER TEMPORARY "CABANAS" ABOUT 1/4 MILE FROM THE MAIN HOTEL COMPLEX. WORKING SPACE FOR THE WHITE HOUSE AND DEPARTMENT OF STATE STAFFS WOULD BE EXTREMELY LIMITED. WE ALSO EXPECT SOME ROOMS WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR VISITING PRESIDENTS EVEN IF THEY DO NOT REMAIN OVERNIGHT.
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E. COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES ON CONTADORA ARE PRACTICALLY NON-EXISTENT. FOR EXAMPLE, THE HOTEL RELIES ON A VHF RADIO LINK TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE MAINLAND. ELECTRICAL POWER IS PROVIDED BY A DIESEL GENERATOR ON THE ISLAND, FOR WHICH THERE IS NO BACK-UP. POTABLE WATER IS CARRIED OUT TO THE ISLAND WEEKLY BY A SMALL TANKER BOAT.

F. THE FOLLOWING REPRESENTS THE AIRLIFT CAPACITY OF U.S.

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MILITARY RESOURCES IN THE CANAL ZONE AND PANAMANIAN AIR FORCE
SUITABLE FOR TRANSPORTING MEMBERS OF THE OFFICIAL PARTY:
U.S. RESOURCES (STANDING DOWN ON ALL OTHER NON-ESSENTIAL
OPERATIONS)
20 UH-1 SINGLE ENGINE HELICOPTERS 140 SEATS
3 UH-1 TWIN ENGLINE HELICOPTERS 21 SEATS
4 CH-47 HEAVY LIFT HELICOPTERS 120 SEATS
1 U-21 FIXED WING AIRCRAFT 5 SEATS
TOTAL 286 SEATS

PANAMANIAN AIR FORCE
2 FAP TWIN OTTERS 36 YEATS
2 FAP ISLANDERS 10 SEATS
1 UH-1N TWIN ENGINE HELICOPTER 7 SEATS
2 TWIN OTTERS (FROM PERLAS AIRLINES) 36 SEATS
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TOTAL 89 SEATS

NOTE: MAXIMUM USE OF CH-47 HELICOPTERS IS RECOMMENDED AS
THEIR TOTAL CAPACITY WOULD REDUCE THE OVERALL NUMBER OF
AIRCRAFT INVOLVED, ALSO IT HAS A WATER LANDING CAPABILITY
AND TWIN ENGINES. THE CH-47, HOWEVER, WOULD NOT BE SUITABLE
FOR AN OVERFLIGHT VIEW OF THE CANAL DUE TO LIMITED VIEWING
FROM THIS HELICOPTER. THE UH-1 IS MOST SUITABLE FOR THIS
PURPOSE, HOWEVER, PASSENGER LOAD PER HELICOPTER SHOULD BE
REDUCED TO 5 IN ORDER THAT THE PARTY CAN BE GIVEN A PROPER
TOUR.

G. THE MAIN DINING ROOM IN THE CONTADORA HOTEL NORMALLY
ACCOMMODATES 120 PEOPLE. IT COULD BE RE-CONFIGURED TO HANDLE
A MAXIMUM OF 200 FOR A BANQUET STYLE OCCASION.

4. CLIMATE OF OPINION AMONG CANAL EMPLOYEES VIS-A-VIS THE
TREATY CAN BE DESCRIBED AS VARYING FROM DEJECTED ACCEPTANCE
TO EXTREME BITTERNESS, AND THE POSSIBILITY OF SOME DISCOURTEOUS
ACT ON THE PART OF SOME EMPLOYEES SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED.
NEVERTHELESS, WE FEEL A VISIT TO THE CANAL TO INCLUDE MEETING
WITH A SMALL GROUP OF EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVES WOULD BE
APPROPRIATE AND DESIRABLE. THIS MAY ALSO BE ONLY OPPORTUNITY
TO MEET WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN PANAMA.

5. POSSIBLE OPTIONS FOR A 2-HOUR CANAL ZONE VISIT:
A. ARRIVE PEDRO MIGUEL LOCKS
MEET WITH SMALL EMPLOYEE GROUP
RECEIVE BRIEFING ON OPERATION
VISIT CONTROL TOWER TO OBSERVE OPERATION
BOARD PANAMA CANAL TOUR LAUNCH LAS CRUCES (LIGHT
LUNCH COULD BE PROVIDED IF DESIRED)
RECEIVE BRIEFING ON ITEMS OF INTEREST IN GAILLARD

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CUT
PROCEED 8 MILES THROUGH GAILLARD CUT, DEBARKING
AT GAMBOA.
MET BY TRANSPORTATION.
B. ARRIVE MIRAFLORES LOCKS
MEET WITH SMALL EMPLOYEE GROUP
RECEIVING BRIEFING ON OPERATION
VISIT CONTROL TOWER TO OBSERVE OPERATION
DEPART ABOARD HELICOPTER FOR OVERFLIGHT AND IN-FLIGHT
BRIEFING OF ENTIRE CANAL
RETURN TO DEPARTURE POINT FOR U.S.

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C. AN OPTION WHICH WOULD INCLUDE A SHORT DURATION
MOTORCADE THROUGH A PORTION OF THE CANAL ZONE COMMUNITY
CAN BE PROVIDED IF THE PRESIDENT WOULD DESIRE MORE PUBLIC
EXPOSURE. THIS HAS NOT BEEN INCLUDED HERE DUE TO TIME
CONSTRAINTS AND THE ADDITIONAL EXPOSURE TO POSSIBLE
DISCOURTEOUS ACTS.

6. THE MANAGEMENT OF THE EL PANAMA HOTEL AND THE HOLIDAY INN
INFORM US THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY HAS PUT THEM ON ALERT FOR
THE USE OF THEIR FACILITIES, BUT HAS NOT INDICATED SPECIFIC
REQUIREMENTS. FOR YOUR INFORMATION, THE FOLLOWING LIST

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SUMMARIZES THE ROOM FACILITIES OF THE MAJOR HOTELS IN TOWN.

HOTEL	DOUBLE ROOMS	SINGLE ROOMS	TOTAL SUITES	AVERAGE OCCUPANCY (PERCENT) FOR JUNE
EL PANAMA	230	100	40	75
HOLIDAY INN	175	95	11	85
EXECUTIVE	100	---	--	95
CONTINENTAL	160	100	--	75
GRANADA	70	50	--	80
CONQUISTADOR	24	16	--	95
SOLOY	120	80	--	30

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THE HOLIDAY INN INFORMS US THEY CAN GUARANTEE THE USE OF ALL THEIR SUITES AND 240 ROOMS. THE EL PANAMA SHOULD BE able TO PROVIDE A SIMILAR NUMBER OF ROOMS, PLUS THE MAJORITY OF THEIR SUITES IF NECESSARY.

7.THE FOLLOWING REPRESENTS THE NUMBER OF BUS SEATS AVAILABLE FROM CANAL ZONE RESOURCES:

AIR CONDITIONED
6 BUSES - 25 SEATS EACH 150 SEATS

NON-AIR CONDITIONED
8 BUSES - 25 SEATS EACH 200 SEATS

CONTRACT BUSES 4200 SEATS

8. SKETCHES, CHARTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS BEING ASSEMBLED AND WILL BE POUCHED.

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Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2793075
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESIDENT\'S VISIT TO PANAMA
TAGS: OVIP, (CARTER, JIMMY)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/3de298a4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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